

## **BENEFITS DERIVED FROM SOCIAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP BY POULTRY FARMERS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA**

*Manfaat Yang Diperoleh Dari Keanggotaan Kelompok Sosial Oleh  
Petani Unggas Di Negara Ondo, Nigeria*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Social Capital is fast taking a defining role as a necessity for successful and sustainable agricultural enterprise. The network of farmers in developing countries like Nigeria has been seen to determine greatly their resilience, ability to escape poverty, take risks and overcome vulnerabilities. Investigating the benefits derived and constraints encountered by poultry farmers in membership of social groups was the main thrust of this study. A two-stage sampling procedure was employed to select 120 poultry farmers in Ondo state. Questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions were used to elicit information from respondents. Data collected was analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. Results reveal that majority of sampled poultry farmers were between 40-59 years of age (53.3%), male (62.5%), married (73.3%), with some level of formal education (85.8%), poultry farming experience of 1-10 years (71.7%) and farm size of between 1-1000 birds (71.7%). Livelihood security (mean=1.19), accessing health services (mean=1.08), recreation (mean=1.07) and consultancy services (mean=1.03) were the top benefits of social group membership reported among respondents. Major constraints to social group membership identified by the respondents were low financial capacity (mean=1.13), poor group coordination (mean=1.22), lack of education (mean=1.08), leadership issues (mean= 0.98) and religious differences (mean=0.95). Institutional support to strengthen social group membership because of its advantages;*

*by providing financial incentives and leadership capacity building for small scale poultry farmers is canvassed.*

**Keyword:** *farmers groups, group participation, poultry production, social capital*

### ABSTRAK

*Modal Sosial dengan cepat mengambil peran penting sebagai suatu kebutuhan bagi usaha pertanian yang sukses dan berkelanjutan. Jaringan petani di negara-negara berkembang seperti Nigeria terlihat sangat menentukan ketahanan mereka, kemampuan untuk keluar dari kemiskinan, mengambil risiko dan mengatasi kerentanan. Menginvestigasi manfaat yang didapat dan kendala yang dihadapi peternak unggas dalam keanggotaan kelompok sosial adalah tujuan utama penelitian ini. Prosedur pengambilan sampel dua tahap digunakan untuk memilih 120 peternak unggas di negara bagian Ondo. Kuesioner yang berisi pertanyaan terbuka dan tertutup digunakan untuk memperoleh informasi dari responden. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan hitungan frekuensi, persentase dan mean. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas peternak unggas sampel berusia antara 40-59 tahun (53,3%), laki-laki (62,5%), menikah (73,3%), dengan tingkat pendidikan formal tertentu (85,8%), pengalaman beternak unggas 1- 10 tahun (71,7%) dan ukuran peternakan antara 1-1000 ekor (71,7%). Keamanan mata pencaharian (rata-rata=1,19), akses terhadap layanan kesehatan (rata-rata=1,08), rekreasi (rata-rata=1,07) dan layanan konsultasi (rata-rata=1,03) merupakan manfaat utama dari keanggotaan kelompok sosial yang dilaporkan di kalangan responden. Kendala utama terhadap keanggotaan kelompok sosial yang diidentifikasi oleh responden adalah rendahnya kapasitas keuangan (rata-rata=1,13), koordinasi kelompok yang buruk (rata-rata=1,22), kurangnya pendidikan (rata-rata=1,08), masalah kepemimpinan (rata-rata= 0,98) dan perbedaan agama (rata-rata =0,95). Dukungan kelembagaan untuk memperkuat keanggotaan kelompok sosial karena kelebihannya; dengan memberikan insentif finansial dan peningkatan kapasitas kepemimpinan bagi peternak unggas skala kecil diteliti.*

**Kata Kunci:** *kelompok tani, partisipasi kelompok, produksi unggas, modal sosial*

### INTRODUCTION

Poultry subsector in the Nigerian livestock industry constitutes a critical and basic part of the agricultural economy. Its contributions go beyond direct food production, it incorporates generation of employment, source of income to farmers, development of the country's economy, and a source of vocation and other multipurpose uses (Olorunwa, 2018). It is the most commercialised of all the subsectors of Nigeria's agriculture and possibly the fastest growing and most flexible of all livestock sectors. For the past two decades, poultry has become the most consumed livestock commodity in the world, especially in developing and

emerging markets where production prospects have been relatively limited. Poultry farming has a significant impact on Nigeria's revenue and the industry presents opportunity for trade and investments in certain aspects of the value chains. According to Onyeneke et al. (2020), Nigeria has the largest market for poultry products in Africa because the poultry sector contributes about \$80 billion (\$600 million) to the economy of Nigeria. The sector supports the livelihood of more than 13 million households who earn part or all their income from poultry business, while it contributes about 6-8% of Nigeria's GDP annually, and about 30% of Agricultural GDP making it the largest producer of poultry eggs and fourth largest poultry meat producer in Africa with about 180 million birds annually, 454,000 tons of meat (total meat produced) and 21 billion eggs produced in Nigeria. Moreover, the poultry industry has witnessed tremendous improvement over the last decade and continues to contribute to achieving Nigeria's food sufficiency and economic growth (Miller et al., 2022; Nigeria Poultry & Livestock, 2020; Masaki et al., 2020). Poultry farming in Nigeria can broadly be classified into two types, subsistent and commercial. The commercial system can be grouped into small, medium and large scale simply by the numbers of birds and modern technologies involved. However, majority of the poultry kept in Nigeria fall under the subsistence system, this has contributed to the country's inability to meet up with its demand for poultry products. More so, commercial poultry production on the other hand requires hybrid breeds (Omisakin, 2019).

Poultry production significance in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, it plays a very important role in supply of protein for human's consumption. However; in spite of the nutritive value of poultry meat, its production in the nation is terribly insufficient as reflected in the wide gap between the demand and supply of the product which could be attributed to various challenges that poultry farmers in Nigeria are facing. Some of these difficulties include the high cost of feed grains, the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown that caused farmers to suffer terrible losses, the unauthorized crossing of the nation's land border for frozen poultry products, and government regulations on the importation of maize, which makes up more than 70% of poultry feeds. Another major challenge to poultry production in Nigeria is low productivity that could be ascribed to technical inefficiency, high cost of production, inadequate extension services and training facilities. Including low capital base, inefficient management, economic inefficiency, diseases and parasites and poor housing, high cost of feeds, poor quality of day old chicks, poor transportation network, medications, labor, lack of information, inadequate access to and high cost of veterinary services, illegal importation of poultry products across the country's land border among others (Adeniyi et al., 2021; Olowa, 2021).

To navigate the turbulent waters of poultry agribusiness challenges, pursuant to increasing productive strength and increasing its market supply; the

present level of technical and economic efficiency must be improved upon. More so, access to the necessary information from the right source is another important way to overcome these challenges. As a result of the numerous risk factors and issues related to poultry management, farmers have developed new management techniques and ways to share information and innovations through social networks for instance cooperatives, associations, and other personal networks. An individual or group's ability to trust one another and collaborate to take advantage of economic possibilities is known as social capital. This includes both formal and informal connections as well as shared values and understandings within society. It consists of the exchange of information within the social structure, rules, sanctions, and trust. Farmers' challenges and risks can be decreased by increasing the efficiency of poultry management through strong social capital from social networks. This is because social networks encourage dissemination of agricultural innovation (Adeniyi et al., 2021; Kansanga et al., 2020; Obayelu et al., 2017).

The role of the social capital has been widely recognised and its effects manifest in networking and trust which facilitates productive resources access, information and knowledge sharing among farmers. Social capital describes the formal and informal connections, shared values and meanings that generate loyalty, trust, accepted behaviour, enabling members to function effectively together taking advantage of available economic, political and social opportunities. In the Nigerian space, social relationships play vital roles in everyday lives of farming communities. These relationships form a strong support system in navigating diverse problems faced by the agricultural producers. Working together as groups gives the individual more capacity to efficiently function for socioeconomic well-being, food security, and agricultural productivity. Membership of social groups also places certain rights, obligations and expectations on individual members, which may or may not foster ease of effective participation. The potential of social capital to provide laudable benefits that will increase poultry production efficiency, innovativeness and development cannot be overemphasized. The significance of social relationships on livelihood security, welfare, and resilience has been explored widely by research but there is a scarce knowledge of its recognised benefits by poultry farmers in Nigeria especially in Ondo state. (Alawode & Adegbe, 2020; Obayelu et al., 2017; Omotesho et al., 2015). Therefore, it is essential to assess the strength and weaknesses of membership of poultry farmers in diverse social groups. Based on this identified gap, this study examined the benefits derived and challenges deterring poultry farmers from social group membership in Ondo state, Nigeria.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted in Ondo State. Ondo State is one of the thirty-six states carved out of old Western state on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1976. It has an area of 14,769 km square. By 2006 census, the population of Ondo is 3,441,024. Lying South-West of Nigeria between longitudes of 4.30° E and 6.00° E of the Greenwich and latitude 5° 45' N and 8° 15' N of the equator. Ondo State is bounded by Kwara, Kogi and Ekiti States in the North, Edo and Delta States in the east and Ogun, Oyo and Osun States in the west and in the south by Atlantic Ocean. The state has the longest coastline in the country bordering the Atlantic Ocean.

Two-stage stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. In the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select Ondo West Local Government Area due to the high population of poultry farmers in the Local Government Area. In the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select 120 poultry farmers from the Local Government Area. Primary data were obtained through questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions to elicit information from respondents.

To measure membership of poultry farmers in social groups, respondents were asked to state whether they belonged to any association. They were also asked to indicate the type of group(s) they belonged to, these included; cooperatives societies, traders unions, artisans unions, political parties, religious societies, mutual support groups and peer/age groups. A list of sixteen possible benefits derived by poultry farmers from participating in group activities was provided for respondents. A 3-point Likert type scale was used to measure the level/extent of benefits derived from group membership with scores of 2, 1 and 0 assigned to high, low and no respectively. The weighted mean score of each statement was calculated and used to rank the benefits as experienced by the poultry farmers. A list of thirteen likely constraints to farmers' participation in group activities was and measured using a 3-point likert-type scale. Scores were assigned as severe constraints = 2, mild constraints = 1 and not a constraint = 0. The sum score of each constraint was calculated and the computed weighted mean was used to rank the constraints to derive the rank of impact of constraints to their membership of social groups. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean, weighted mean, standard deviation and pie charts.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Selected Personal and Enterprise Characteristics

Table 1. shows data on the selected personal characteristics of the respondents as regards to age, sex, marital status, household size, educational level and years of farming experience. Findings reveal that majority of the respondents were predominantly male, being 62.5% of the respondents while female only accounted for 37.5%. This is in conformity with Thus et al., (2022) which revealed that majority of the farmers are male, and that the Female's role in livestock activities is to help ease men's work due to the heavy labour required in it. Also, this may be as a result of an extra effort in making additional income to cater for the family as stated by Fadimu et al. (2020). More so, this is consented to Akintunde et al. (2021) which revealed that poultry farming is still predominantly a male occupation likely because of the high level of risk involved, labour intensity, and other husbandry processes which might be burdensome to women. However, it is in contrast to Oyelami et al. (2022) which revealed female as the majority in their study. The table also shows that majority of the farmers (52.5%) were within the age range of 31-50 years with a mean age of 47 years. This shows that respondents were in their middle ages which implies that the farmers are still in their economically viable age, hence can contribute significantly to poultry production which would positively affect production. This corroborates reports of Ogunyemi & Orowole (2020) and Agboola et al. (2021) that poultry farmers are in their active ages when they are below the age range of 50 years. Poultry production in the study area is obviously an agribusiness of choice for the vibrant, entrepreneurial, productive and mature age range in the population.

Data on marital status of the respondents show that married persons constituted the largest of respondents which is 73.3%. This corroborates Adedeji et al. (2014) and Ogunwale et al. (2021) that majority of poultry farmers in Ilesha West LGA of Osun State and Oluyole LGA of Oyo State were married. It is culturally perceived that married persons are more committed to generating income to meet the responsibility of satisfying their household needs; hence securing better quality of life for themselves. The educational profile of the respondents shows that the majority of the respondents had varying levels of formal education. Respondents with tertiary education level formed the majority with 40.8%, while respondents with primary education and secondary education formed 25.0% and 20.0% respectively. This is in contrary to the finding of a study by Yekosabeth et al. (2022) in which majority had just primary education in Yukono district in Uganda. Meanwhile, respondents with no formal educational formed 14.2%. This is an indication that most of the farmers are literate with higher levels of critical reasoning and problem solving capacity. This is similar to findings of Obayelu et al. (2017) which postulating that farmers with high level

of literacy tend to be more efficient in production and readily accept innovation when compared with the illiterate ones that rely on only their experience. Results further show that the mean years of experience in poultry production was 10 years. Less than one-third (28.3%) had 1 - 5 years of experience, 43.3% had 6-10 years of experience, 2.5% had 11-15 years of experience and 17.5% accounted for those that have been into poultry production between 16-20 years while only 8.3% had over 21 years of experience in poultry production. This indicates that 71.7% of the respondents had above 5 years poultry farming experience. This corroborates Babatunde et al. (2021) which implies that majority of them have been in poultry farming for a long time and this may influence their membership in group activities. The average year of experience of 10 years shows that the respondents have high level of experience ranging between 10 – 15 years. This expectedly will positively impact on their group membership status as it is expected that the length of years of involvement in poultry farming will come with increasing connections within the industry.

Table 1. Respondents' Selected Personal Characteristics

No	Characteristics	Amount	Percentage %	Mean
1	Sex			
	Male	75	62.5	
	Female	45	37.5	
2	Age			
	20-29	13	10.83	
	30-39	14	11.67	
	40-49	36	30	47
	50-59	28	23.33	
	≥60	29	24.17	
3	Marital Status			
	Single	15	12.5	
	Married	88	73.33	
	Widowed	13	10.83	
	Divorced	4	3.33	
4	Educational Level			
	No formal education	17	14.17	
	Primary education	30	25	
	Secondary education	24	20	
	Tertiary education	49	40.83	
5	Years of Poultry Farming Experience			
	1-5	34	28.33	
	6-10	52	43.33	
	11-15	3	2.5	10
	16-20	21	17.5	
	21-25	10	8.33	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2. Respondents' Selected Enterprise Characteristics

No	Characteristics	Amount	Percentage	Mean
1	Farm Size (Number of birds)			
	1-500	68	56.67	1243
	501-1000	4	3.33	
	1001-2000	29	24.17	
	2001-3000	14	11.67	
	>3001	5	4.17	
2	Sources of labour			
	Family labour	24	20	
	Hired labour	95	79.17	
	Communal labour	1	0.83	
3	Level of Poultry Occupation			
	Primary occupation	47	39.17	
	Secondary occupation	73	60.83	
4	Sources of Capital			
	Personal savings	69	57.5	
	Relative/friends	13	10.83	
	Cooperatives	37	30.83	
	Grants from government	1	0.83	
5	Poultry business ownership type			
	Sole Proprietorship	109	90.83	
	Partnership	11	9.17	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2. reports that the respondents with an average farm size of 1,243 birds. Majority (56.7%) of the respondents had birds ranging from 1 to 500, followed by 24.2% in the range of 1,001 to 2,000 birds while just 4.2% had more than 3,001 birds. The number of birds is a vital way to judge the size of the poultry business enterprise. Hence the survey has shown that all (100%) of the farmers operate very small scale (<1,000 birds) and small scale (<5,000 birds) poultry businesses. Consequently the respondents will have the business limitations popular among small producers such as economy of scale; which a strong poultry farmer group membership will enable them to pull on group strength to access inputs, services and opportunities at fairer prices. In consonance with Edeoghon & Esene (2018) the labour source for majority (79.2%) of the farmers was hired, with a larger part (60.8%) of the respondents operating poultry farms as their secondary occupation with personal savings being the main source (57.5%) of their capital. This disagrees with Oyedokun et al. (2023) which found that majority of poultry farmers used family labour. The results also revealed a larger part (60.8%) of the respondents operating poultry farms as their secondary occupation and sole owners (90.8%) of the business. These findings reveal that most of the farmers operate small poultry farm businesses which may



be consequence of the fact that capital is limited to personal savings and because it's a secondary income generating activity for the majority of farmers surveyed; thus limiting the level of investment and commitment. Oluyemi & Falaye (2022) confirmed this and stated many of them may have reduced their scale of production as a result of increase in the cost of production especially in poultry feeds.

### Membership of Social Groups and Poultry Associations

Results in Figure 1. show that majority (72%) of the respondents do not belong to poultry farmers' associations. This is in contrary to Edeoghon & Esene (2018) which stated majority of the Nigerian's poultry farmers were in Poultry Association of Nigeria. This may be as a result of the scale of production which is low based on the mean size of their farms reported in the study and possibly because most of them operate the business as a secondary occupation.

Figure 2. shows that all of the respondents are members of one type of social group or the other with 40 percent indicating that they are members of cooperatives; followed by 18% participating in traders unions and political parties (12%). Group types with the least patronage include religious societies (3%), mutual support groups (3%) and peer/age groups (3%). This is in contrary to Omotesho et al (2016) which recorded that 65.5% of farmers in Kwara State, Nigeria belonged to more than one farmer-groups. Cooperatives enjoy high patronage probably due to the financial backbone it offers to its membership which in turn will strengthen the financial capacity and resilience of poultry farmers as necessary. Also, this maybe because cooperatives are accessible, convenient and smallholder business friendly institutions; especially for the coordination and management of small agribusiness resources (Hariance et al., 2023). This is a strong indicator of what attracts poultry farmers to join social groups. Finance related groups enjoy higher patronage than those based on occupation, religion, age or kinship.

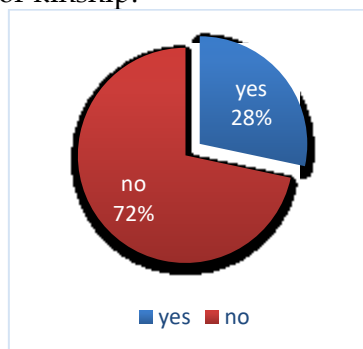


Figure 1.

The Distribution of Respondents based on Membership in Poultry Associations

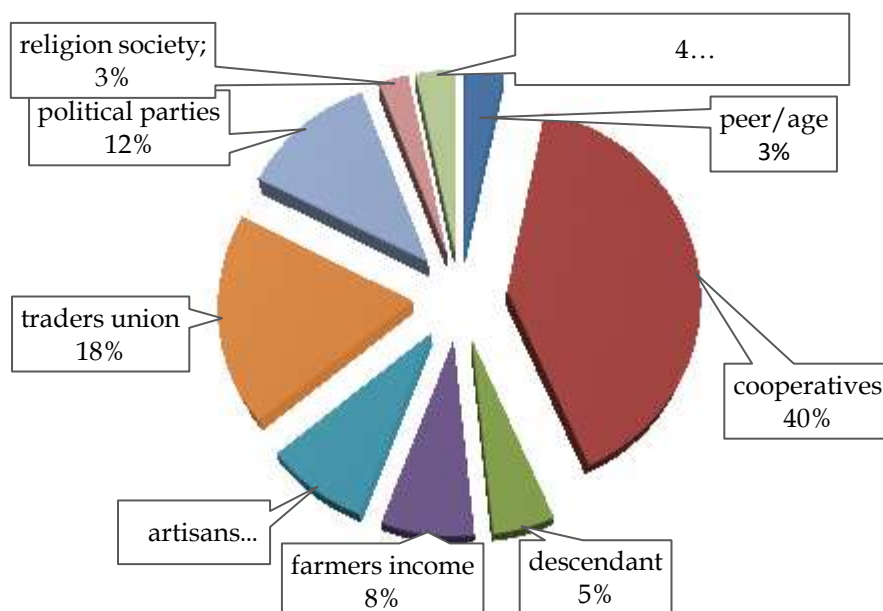


Figure 2.  
Distribution of Social Groups Membership

### Benefits Derived from Participating in Social Group Activities

Table 3. shows the responses of respondents on the benefit they derive from participating in social groups. The results show that livelihood security ranks highest (Mean = 1.19), with health services (mean = 1.08), recreational services (mean = 1.07) and consultancy services (mean = 1.03) in descending order of magnitude. Benefits ranked lowest were credit facility/loans (mean 0.23) input supply (mean=0.58) and empowerment programmes (mean=0.66). Benefits directly related to poultry enterprise were not among the highly ranked benefits, benefits like buying of chicks at cheaper price was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> position (mean=0.96), access to market information ranked 7<sup>th</sup> (mean 0.93), access to credits / grants and feeds supply were ranked 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> respectively. This is contrary to Dada et al. (2021) which revealed that access to farm inputs was the first among the three major benefits followed by adoption of technology and access to agricultural information by rice farmers from participating in group activities in Ogun State. This disparity could also be due to the fact that most of the respondents did not belong to groups that focus on poultry farming, hence the benefits derived from social group membership are more widely distributed to other areas of their general well being such as personal development, health and leisure.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents Based on Benefits Derived From Social Group Membership

Benefits	Weighted mean	Rank
Livelihood Security	1.19	1 <sup>st</sup>
Health services	1.08	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Recreational services	1.07	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Consultancy services	1.03	4 <sup>th</sup>
Education	0.97	5 <sup>th</sup>
Availability of chicks at cheaper price*	0.96	6 <sup>th</sup>
Access to market information	0.93	7 <sup>th</sup>
Food supply	0.89	8 <sup>th</sup>
Rental services	0.89	9 <sup>th</sup>
Access to credit/Grants*	0.82	10 <sup>th</sup>
Feeds supply*	0.81	11 <sup>th</sup>
Training	0.75	12 <sup>th</sup>
Capacity building	0.68	13 <sup>th</sup>
Empowerment programmes	0.66	14 <sup>th</sup>
Service provider	0.58	15 <sup>th</sup>
Input supply*	0.58	15 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field Survey, 2021

\*Benefits directly affecting poultry enterprise

### Constraints to Participation of Poultry Farmers in Social Groups

Results of analysis from Table 4. show the distribution of respondents based on the level of constraints to membership in social group activities. Findings of the study presented in Table 4. show that poor coordination of group programmes is a strong constraint (mean = 1.22) to respondents' participation. This suggests a programme planning capacity deficiency within the social groups in the study area; presenting a need for capacity building in this regard.

The table also reveals financial challenges (mean = 1.13) was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> as another critical constraint reported by poultry farmers to social group participation. This infers that poultry farmers find it difficult to source for funds and other finance related services to facilitate their group membership in the study area. This aligns with Olorunwa (2018) and Ogunyemi & Orowole (2020) who also identified inadequate finance as a major constraint of poultry producers in Nigeria. More so, Oluyemi & Falaye (2020) and Chaudhary et al. (2020) stated finance as a major constraint to poultry production.

Kshash & Oda (2019) also asserted financial challenge as a major constraint to poultry production in their study, though marketing was ranked first in their study. Farmers have therefore been unable to expand their scale of production or purchase the required inputs like feeds and medicine to enhance their production which the social groups are unable to provide. Financial challenges and responsibilities (such as dues and levies) impede membership as every

group places financial responsibilities on the farmers in which many may not be able to meet effectively. Family problems/engagements were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, while lack of education and leadership crisis were ranked as the fourth and fifth major constraints respectively to their participation in social groups. The ranking of family problems as a constraints being high in the study area is also possibly the reason why descendant unions reported a low patronage. This shows that blood/kin relationship does not necessarily provide a strong social capital base for the respondents within the study area. As it is viewed more as a weakness than strength.

Table 4 Distribution of Constraints Faced by the Respondents in Social Group Membership

Constraints	Weighted Mean	Rank
Poor coordination of programmes	1.22	1 <sup>st</sup>
Financial challenges	1.13	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Family Problems/engagements	1.08	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Lack of education	1.08	4 <sup>th</sup>
Leadership Crisis	0.98	5 <sup>th</sup>
Culture	0.97	6 <sup>th</sup>
Religion issue	0.96	7 <sup>th</sup>
Misappropriation of funds by the officials	0.88	8 <sup>th</sup>
Marital Problems	0.85	9 <sup>th</sup>
Insecurity issues	0.76	10 <sup>th</sup>
Health challenges	0.75	11 <sup>th</sup>
Tribal or ethnic issues	0.73	12 <sup>th</sup>
Lack of Information	0.58	13 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field Survey, 2021

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

This study's investigation of benefits derived by poultry farmers' membership in social group activities in Ondo state showed poultry farmers in the study area are predominantly male, middle aged, married, well educated and small scale poultry business owners. According to the study, multiple benefits were traceable to their membership of social groups especially cooperatives. The study further revealed that poultry farmers in the study area do not subscribe well to membership of poultry based associations but participate well in other social groups reporting wide spread benefits of membership. Groups whose major activities are channel towards finance enjoy higher patronage than occupation, religion, age or kinship based associations. Livelihood securities, health services, recreational services, consultancy services and education were

the major benefits derived by farmers in social group membership. Meanwhile, the major constraints to membership in social group by the farmers in the study area were identified to be; poor coordination of programmes, financial challenges, lack of education, leadership crisis, culture and financial accountability.

Finally, social capital has an important contribution to poultry production in Ondo State. Social capital can help in providing solutions to the problems faced by farmers.

### **Suggestion**

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested;

- a) There should be adequate organization of trainings and seminars for poultry famers about the benefits of social capital on poultry production for maximum output.
- b) Promoting social capital (involvement in social groups) among poultry farmers is therefore a great way to enhance their production
- c) Poultry associations should incorporate beneficial activities (such as cooperatives, trainings etc) into their structure to motivate and encourage better membership.
- d) Institutional support to encourage social group participation because of its advantages; by providing financial incentives such as loans and grants, communication technology usage, training and capacity building for small scale poultry farmers.

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